

Regarding the Trial Period of relocating the Music Ministry

- On the second weekend of May, our parish will begin an experiment ... for a trial period of two months....

... for May and June the choir and musicians will be relocated from the choir loft to down here in the congregation.

- we will have an opportunity to physically be more connected to them and them to us as we unite as one in the Mass.

- I am told that at some points in the parish history ...choirs began downstairs and music was led from the front.

- The recent discussion about having the choir downstairs began last June.

- parish council had a day-long workshop with a facilitator to help us to look at the needs of our parish and to focus on one project.

- we brain stormed many possible projects ... including how to address the need of youth and young families, how to have more education opportunities, or programs directed at seniors...

- we got down to our top 3 or 4 suggestions and

.... then agreed on bringing the Music Ministry into the midst of the congregation as the project that we felt would be most hands on.

-Bringing our idea to reality, we had imagined ...a process of communication with the choirs and parishioners .. it did not transpire as we had hoped

- trying to keep up with all of the regular activities of parish life

- the communication and dialogue with the choir was spotty and not systematic.

- the communication and education never made it to the bulletin

- But the dialogue and proposals of deciding how and where downstairs continued in bits & pieces

- Then on Saturday January 23rd after the 4:30 pm Mass our choir director- Jeannine, Rose Marie Bergeron- our Liturgy Chairperson and myself met with those who play instruments

- various downstairs configurations were discussed and from the options presented ...their judgement for the right side of the church was accepted

- due to their apprehension with how this would work out, they agreed that they would engage in a trial period and evaluation before a decision to make it permanent was to be made. We agreed.

- Though admittedly late in the process finally on the evening of Wednesday April 13th, the Pastoral Council and Jeannine Longe our music director met with the majority of our choir members

- the origins of the idea for relocation was explained by Judy Chaperon our Chairperson

- the comments from the Ministry Surveys regarding the parishioners and choir members were reviewed by our Liturgy Chairperson, Rose Marie Bergeron

- and Jeannine Longe did an awesome job at sharing the purpose and hopes of the relocation.

- as we had been hearing throughout the months: emotions were high and a lot of resistance was voiced by the choir membersunderstandably so.

- we all get very comfortable and set in our ways ... the phrase "if it's not broken why try to fix it" comes out....

- there is fear of change and a feeling that “it works so just leave it” ... when these feelings are strong they often override a willingness to be open to possibilities. As a council we see the more, what could be.

- **there are a few from the Music Ministry** who do feel this is a worthwhile project and are willing to give it a go... and some who oscillate back and forth.

- once the meeting with the choir was concluded, the Pastoral Council evaluated what had been shared, and aware of the resistance...

- and knowing that it would not be easy for anyone, we decided unanimously that having pondered this project for many months ...

- our parish should go ahead with the two month experiment with the choir in the front pews of the church during May and June.

- **It will take a couple of weeks for parishioners and choir to settle in to the new reality.**

- Like anything, we will all be disoriented while out of our comfort zone.

- we hope that after feeling out the new area and settling into the new location, the choir and congregation will be better able to evaluate the project.

- It will be a “trying on for size” period...and to see the reality of the pros and cons instead of only speculating about them.

- in many forms this has been a year long process, so council felt we should not simply scrap it despite different opinions.

- **We are very blessed to have dedicated musicians at both of our weekend Masses**

- some members may find it too much to bear... but if we don't try it ...we will never know.

- being downstairs with the rest of the congregation can bring many benefits to all

- we trust that their love of the gift of music that they bring to our parish will carry them through this two month trial period

- **the trial period will begin the weekend of May 14-15**

- the day after we celebrate Confirmation, the physical transition will begin

- the pews will be moved, microphones and equipment will be brought down

- **Not only will the choir experience tremendous change but so will each parishioner and even your pastor.**

All of us will be disoriented and need to make compromises and adjustments

- there are pros and cons to having a choir up in the loft ...and pros and cons with having the choir in the midst of the congregation.

- **It will take a couple of weeks for parishioners and choir to settle in to the new reality.**

Like anything, we will all be disoriented while out of our comfort zone.

After settling in, we then can feel the new area out; if we make the best of it then we will be more able to evaluate.

- **We believe the trial should be given a fair opportunity.**

- we ask that all unite in this project of ...“trying it on for size”.

- we will evaluate our experience as we go ...and at the conclusion of the trial period.

Please feel free to share your thoughts with the members of the Pastoral Council listed on the front of the weekly bulletin, including Fr. Jim by calling the parish office.